

G. H. GOUNDIE, UNITED STATES CONSUL AT ZURICH.

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LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF STATE,

COMMUNICATING

*Information relative to application of the United States Consul at Zurich,  
for increased compensation, &c.*

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JANUARY 15, 1859.—Laid upon the table and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, January 12, 1859.

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 10th instant, transmitting for the examination of the department a letter dated the 10th instant, addressed to you by Hon. W. H. Dimmick, of the House of Representatives, enclosing the memorial of Mr. G. H. Goundie, United States consul at Zurich, praying "to be allowed in the deficiency bill \$800 annually, from the 1st of January, 1857, to the 1st of July, 1859, \* \* \* and in the new consular appropriation bill, also \$800 annually over and above the fees, beginning on the 1st of July, 1859."

In reply to your request for any information upon the subject which may be furnished from the files of the department, I have the honor to state that it does not appear to have been the object of the framers of the acts of March 1, 1855 and August 18, 1856, regulating the diplomatic and consular systems of the United States, to place all the United States consulates on a footing of perfect equality, or even the several consulates in any one country, but simply to attach to each consulate such compensation as the duties belonging to it, or its relative importance justly required. For instance, there are in England five salaried consuls at the principal ports or places of commercial and manufacturing business, who receive salaries and are not permitted to engage in business, four who are allowed to trade and who receive for their compensation the consular fees; and eight consular agents, subordinate to the principal consular officers, by whom they are respectively appointed, at the less important ports

and places, but where the presence of a consular officer is occasionally required.

In Scotland there are two salaried consuls not permitted to trade ; one consul who receives the fees and is allowed to trade, and two consular agents ; in Ireland two salaried, three unsalaried, and four consular agents ; in Russia five salaried consuls, one of whom only, at a salary of \$1000, is permitted to trade, and three unsalaried consuls ; in France six salaried consuls not permitted to trade, with salaries varying from \$ 1,500 to \$5,000 ; three unsalaried consuls, and eighteen consular agents ; in Spain two salaried consuls not permitted to trade at salaries of \$1,500 each, seven unsalaried consuls, and two consular agents ; in Denmark one salaried consul not permitted to trade and two unsalaried consuls ; in Sweden and Norway four unsalaried consuls ; in Prussia one salaried consul not permitted to trade, one with a salary of \$1,000 and allowed to trade, and one consular agent ; in Italy four unsalaried consuls ; in Switzerland, the country in which Zurich is situated, there is one salaried consul, at Basle, in the northwestern part of the country, at which, until the establishment of the consulate at Zurich, invoices of most of the goods exported from Switzerland to the United States were verified, the business is now divided between Basle and Zurich ; the invoices amounting in value, on an average, quarterly to \$300,000 at the first named place and at the latter to \$500,000 ; and one consulate in the southwestern part, established chiefly for the convenience of American travellers arriving in and departing from Switzerland. Each of these consuls is authorized, with the sanction of the President to appoint agents at places within their respective consular jurisdiction. In view of the small number of salaried consular offices, it was doubtless thought sufficient to establish two such offices in Switzerland. The salary of the consul at Basle is \$2,000, and at Geneva \$1,500. The fees of the consulate at Zurich were in 1853, \$3,639 ; in 1854, \$4,007 ; in 1855, \$2,040 ; in 1856, \$1,578 ; in 1857, \$1,628, and for the first six months of 1858, \$698 ; the consular returns for the last two quarters of the year have not been received.

The consul at Zurich is permitted to engage in business from which the consuls at Basle and Geneva are restricted.

With regard to the functions of consuls, and more especially at the consulate in Zurich, to which reference is made by Mr. Goundie, I have to state that consuls are considered by the department simply as commercial officers, and in no case are they invested with diplomatic powers except in States not Christian.

For the information of the committee in reference to our trade with Switzerland, to which you call the attention of the department, I beg leave to refer to the first volume of the Commercial Relations of the United States, pages 405-413, being Ex. Doc. No. 47, 1st session 34th Congress, House of Representatives, and to the annual report of the Secretary of State on Foreign Commerce for 1856, pages 147 and 148, being Ex. Doc. No. 60, 34th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives.

I also transmit, herewith, extracts from several of Mr. Goundie's

despatches. From the information thus furnished, the committee will be able to determine whether it be expedient to increase the number of salaried consulates in Switzerland, or to recommend further legislation for the relief of the memorialist.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

LEWIS CASS.

Hon. G. W. HOPKINS,

*Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Reps.*

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WASHINGTON, *January 10, 1859.*

SIR: Enclosed find a statement from G. H. Goundie, of Bethlehem, Northampton county, Pennsylvania. His statements are perfectly reliable. I hope, if there is any consular bill reported from your committee, you add an amendment in committee correcting the inequality that exists. Mr. Goundie is a constituent of mine now in this country on leave.

Very respectfully,

W. H. DIMMICK.

Hon. GEO. W. HOPKINS.

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I, G. H. Goundie, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was United States consul at Basle, in Switzerland, from 1845 to 1849; and during all that time the only United States representative in Switzerland, we having no other consul and no diplomatic agent.

I attended to all the consular as well as diplomatic duties during those four years, and never received any other compensation but the consular fees, which in no year amounted to over \$1,200; it being an inland country, (manufacturing,) and we having specified duties at that time, the consular certificate not being required on invoices, was the reason of the small amount of fees received.

For this sum (\$1,200) I attended to all the duties which a minister resident, secretary of legation, and three consuls now do, and at a cost to the government of nearly \$14,000.

In 1848, when the new system of custom duties was introduced in Switzerland, I attended in person their sessions, and, through my exertions, rendered great service to our country, in having the duties on all our staple articles, particularly on tobacco, cotton, rice, &c., put at the very lowest rate, to the great satisfaction of our government, of which, Mr. Buchanan was then Secretary of State.

In 1851, a new consulate was created at Zurich, (making the second in Switzerland,) and Mr. Kiderlin appointed consul, whilst Mr. Burchard was consul at Basle.

In 1852, the mission to Switzerland was created, and Mr. Fay appointed minister resident, which position he still holds.

In 1853, I was appointed consul at Zurich, and still hold it.

In 1854, another (third) consulate was created for Switzerland, viz,

at Geneva, and Mr. Bolten appointed consul; and at the same time a law passed making all salary officers, and placing all three consuls in Switzerland on an equal footing, viz, \$1,500 salary; and the fees received at each consulate to be returned to the treasury.

Up to this time the consulates at Basle and Zurich had an allowance of \$100 annually as office rent; but by this new act this was also taken off.

In 1856, a new consular bill was passed, giving Basle \$2,000 salary and \$200 office rent; Geneva, \$1,500 salary and \$150 office rent; but by some mistake or error Zurich was made a fee office. This went into operation the first of January, 1857. The fees received at the Basle consulate in 1857 were \$1,390, giving that office \$810 out of the treasury for that year, over and above the fees received. The receipts in the three first quarters of 1858 were about the same as in 1857.

The fees received at the Geneva consulate in 1857, were \$160!! giving that office \$1,490 out of the treasury over and above the fees received. In this office the three first quarters of 1858 were also about the same as in 1857.

Thus, you will see that the treasury pays the Basle consulate annually about \$800 over and above the fees received; and pays the Geneva consulate nearly \$1,500 over and above the fees received; whilst my consulate, an older and much more important one, is obliged, through an error or mistake in consular bill of 1856, to put up with the fees only.

I most respectfully appeal to you to place me on an equal footing with the other two Swiss consulates, and particularly with that of Basle, as it is fully and even more important than that one.

I would most respectfully ask to be allowed in the deficiency bill the \$800 annually, from first of January, 1857, to June 30, 1859; and in the new diplomatic and consular bill appropriation bill, also, \$800 annually over and above the fees received from first of July, 1859.

Both the President, as well as the State Department, acknowledge the great injustice done me through the consular bill of 1856.

Respectfully submitted by

G. H. GOUNDIE,

*United States Consul at Zurich, Switzerland.*

JANUARY 12, 1859.

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[Extracts.]

No. 2.]

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
*Zurich, January 25, 1858.*

SIR: Under date of the 27th ultimo, I received your despatch dated December 9, 1857, informing me "that, according to section 22 of the act of Congress of August 18, 1856, to consuls who are allowed to trade, no office rent can be allowed." This I consider quite a hard-



ship, as under the old law, up to July 1, 1855, when this was a "fee office," as at present, I was allowed \$100 per annum as office rent, a special appropriation having been made at each session of Congress to that effect, and the last during the session of 1854-'55, which was, however, annulled by the act granting salaries, and which went into operation July 1, 1855; and although I was only allowed \$1,500 salary by that act, I was further prevented from drawing the office rent that year, although specially allowed by the same Congress. Since my last despatch, I have received by post from the department, the 4th vol. of Commercial Relations. \* \* \* \*

In my last despatch I forwarded to you a statement of fees received at this office for the last three months, being the fourth quarter of 1857, and amounting to \$342 00, making the total receipt for the year \$1,628 00.

As regards the privilege of being allowed to trade, it is worth nothing at an inland consulate, and up to this time I have not derived one cent benefit by it. Although the business of this office has been larger than at Basle, yet that being a salary office of \$2,000, is nearly \$400 better than this, which I feel very much, as were this a salary office I believe I would be entitled to office rent; but unfortunately this allowance is also cut off. During the years 1854, '55 and '56, at great trouble and expense, I obtained valuable commercial statistics which I forwarded in despatches Nos. 10, 11 and 12, to the department, and which were acknowledged by the department under date of February 19, April 10, and May 4, expressing their fullest satisfaction. \* \* \* I believe an act of Congress makes an appropriation for compensation for such work.

During my absence Mr. Hilgard, an American citizen residing at this place, acted as agent for me, of which the department had information. I paid him for his services \$209 35, his receipt for the same being enclosed. As the receipts of this office were not in accordance with the labor done, and my expenses exceeding them to a considerable amount, I have taken the liberty of presenting the bill, believing that I am fully entitled to it, and that the department will see the justice of the claim and allow it. \* \* \* \*

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient humble servant,

G. H. GOUNDIE,

*Consul.*

Hon. LEWIS CASS,

*Secretary of State.*

[Extracts.]

No. 13.]

CONSULATE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
*Zurich in Switzerland, March 12, 1855.*

SIR: \* \* \* \*

My house rent amounts to nearly half that sum (\$1,500) alone, Switzerland, and particularly Zurich, is one of the most expensive places on

the continent; the immense influx of wealthy English families during the summer season, is the cause of it. At present I have my family with me, but will be obliged to send them back to Pennsylvania, where they can live on less than one-half (including house rent) what it costs here, and I shall remain here alone during the rest of my service."

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I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't humble serv't,  
G. H. GOUNDIE, *Consul*.

Hon. W. L. MARCY, *Secretary of State*.

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[Extracts.]

No. 14.]

CONSULATE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
*Zurich, May 8, 1855.*

SIR: \* \* \* \* \*

"In 1854, goods amounting to twenty-six millions of francs were legalized at this consulate, and but eight millions at Basle, although Geneva is included, as it belonged to that consular district. Now Geneva has its separate consul, and the business of the Basle consulate will therefore be reduced nearly one-half, so that, although the exportation from the country to the United States, will be but about one-half what it was in 1854, yet this consulate will do six or eight times as much business, and the consul the same proportion of labor, as those of Basle and Geneva. \* \* \* I trust you will take these matters into consideration, and if in your power, I am convinced that I may expect a favorable result."

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I am very respectfully, your obedient humble servant,  
G. H. GOUNDIE, *Consul*.

Hon. W. L. MARCY, *Secretary of State*.